

BESA backs 'Olympic class' skills challenge

2 years ago



The [Building Engineering Services Association](#) (BESA) has been selected as an organising partner of the [WorldSkills UK](#) competition that celebrates emerging and existing technical skills.

The Association is organising the [refrigeration and air conditioning \(RAC\) category](#) of this major global skills event. UK students and apprentices aged 16 and above are now being invited to put their skills to the test and could ultimately win a place on the UK team that will compete at the 'Skills Olympics' in Shanghai in 2026.

[WorldSkills](#) is a global movement involving more than 80 countries and is a partnership between the education sector, businesses, and governments. It was set up to help young people develop and showcase their talent through competitions-based training, assessment, and benchmarking with the aim of driving investment in emerging talent to support economic growth and create employment opportunities.

The [WorldSkills UK Competitions](#) are open for entry now and applications must be submitted by March 28.

Each participating country puts forward a team for the biennial 'World Skills' competition (known as the 'Skills Olympics') comprising the winners of individual sector skills challenges. The 2022 event was postponed due to pandemic lockdowns and [will now take place in Shanghai in 2026](#).

WorldSkills UK said: "The insights we gain from training as part of this global network enables us to embed world-class training standards across the UK to help drive investment, jobs, and economic growth.

"We are working to help the UK become a 'skills economy', boosting the prestige of technical and professional education by embedding world-class training standards across the UK to help drive

investment, jobs, and economic growth.”

The competitions, designed by industry experts, are run across sectors including digital, creative, and engineering. BESA will deliver a range of tests for the RAC competitors.

“We are delighted and proud to be asked to co-ordinate the competition for this important skills sector,” said Helen Yeulet, the Association’s director of competence and compliance.

Opportunity

“This is an amazing opportunity for young people in our industry to showcase and celebrate their skills in a prestigious international competition. As well as promoting themselves, they will also be demonstrating to the world the importance of the RAC sector and the breadth and depth of talent we have here in the UK.

“The industry is developing rapidly, and apprentices are being challenged to work with a growing range of technologies. This ‘Olympic class’ challenge will be the ultimate test of their practical skills and technical knowledge,” she added.

The competition is a seven-month process including regional heats and intensive training before stepping up to the ultimate test of the national finals in November, which will be held at venues across Greater Manchester. The finals will see young people from across the UK come together before the winners are announced and celebrated at a glittering medal ceremony.

Students and apprentices who excel in the national finals could then be selected to join WorldSkills UK’s international development and training programme, which can lead to them being selected for Team UK and competing at WorldSkills.

“Taking part in WorldSkills UK competitions can be a lifechanging experience that develops crucial skills and boosts future earnings,” said Ben Blackledge, chief executive of WorldSkills UK.

“Our competitions develop the personal and technical skills that employers are looking for in new recruits. I would encourage everyone to have a look at the many options available and sign up to compete.”

He added that most previous entrants said taking part had improved their technical knowledge (87%) and personal and employability skills (79%).

Essential

Refrigeration and air conditioning systems provide the conditions needed to support health, comfort, and manufacturing, they also control the essential environments required for food, pharmaceuticals, and digital data.

The competition will challenge entrants to demonstrate their skills and knowledge through tasks inspired by real life industry scenarios. They will be tested on digital programming, fault finding/diagnosis, fabrication, service, maintenance, and record keeping as well as their ability to charge equipment and recover refrigerants in line with environmental legislation.

Candidates must be working towards a level 3 qualification in refrigeration/air conditioning/heat pumps or have achieved a qualification within the last 12 months. They must also have no more than three years industry experience outside of their apprenticeship period.



To enter by March 28th, go to: [WorldSkills UK Competitions](#).